Delhi today has enthusiasm and satisfaction. There is relief of liberating Delhi from 'AAP-da'. India needs a serious political transformation and not politics of dhoort-ta (deceit) and moorkhta (foolishness)

NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER

We fought a good election... We will play role of constructive opposition but will also be available to people of Delhi. We did not enter politics for a position of power but we see politics as a way to work for the public

ARVIND KEJRIWAL, AAP SUPREMO

CAPITAL GAIN

The results are nothing more than a referendum on Arvind Kejriwal and AAP. The results are not a stamp of approval on the policies of the Prime Minister but it is a mandate that rejects Arvind Kejriwal's politics of deceit, fraud and exaggerated claims of achievements

JAIRAM RAMESH, CONGRESS LEADER

Aur lado aapas mein!!! (Fight more with each other)

OMAR ABDULLAH, NC LEADER, J&K CM

He took a dig at AAP and Cong over infighting in INDIA bloc

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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BJP SWEEPS OUT AAP

Delhi goes saffron after 27 yrs, ends AAP's 10-yr rule; Cong's drought continues

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets supporters at BJP headquarters after the party's win in Delhi Assembly elections; A deserted AAP office in New Delhi **PHOTOS: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

BJP on Saturday returned to power in Delhi after 27 years to sweep away Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP with a two-thirds majority on the back of a hyper localised campaign and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'AAP-da'(disaster) blitzkrieg.

Adding to the ignominy of AAP that was battling 10 years of anti-incumbency was the shocking defeat of former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal himself by BJP's Parvesh Verma and other top leaders including his close aide and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, Somnath Bharti and Saurabh Bhardwaj. Chief Minister Atishi, an academic and unlikely politician, weathered the storm to retain Kalkaji seat.

Saurabh, who lost from the Greater Kailash seat, on voting day had accused the Delhi Police of putting bar-ricades at 200 metres at polling stations at AAP strongholds inclusing his constituency.

Saurabh lost by just 3,188 to BJP's Shikha Roy

The elections were largely seen as a bipolar contest between AAP, which made a determined bid for a fourth term, and BJP. While AAP had 62 members in the outgoing house, the saffron party had just eight legislators.

Congress, which had ruled for 15 consecutive years under Sheila Dikshit from 1998, came a cropper in the Assembly elections failing to get even a single seat for the third straight time.

With Delhi now in its kitty after a battle of prestige given its symbolic importance as the country's capital, BJP has extended its footprint, the victories helping it put behind some of the reverses of the 2024 Lok Sa-bha elections where it bagged 240 seats, short of the 272-majority mark.

Hailing BJP's victory as "historic", Prime Minister Modi said people of Delhi have shown the door to 'AAP-da' and now a 'double-engine' government will ensure development at a double speed.

For AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal, the face of the party launched on an anti-corruption plank in 2012, it was a tantalising seesaw ending in despair. He lost by 4,089 votes to BJP's Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma.

"Who will be chief minister will be decided by the central leadership," said Verma.

A loss in Delhi, which it ruled for 10 successive years from 2015, signals an end to its national ambitions with now only Punjab in its pocket.

It was a dramatic downslide for the AAP, which won 67 of the 70 seats in 2015 when it established its domi-nance by wiping out both Congress and BJP and 62 in 2020. The promise of mohalla clinics, model schools, free water and electricity seemed to have lost their sheen. BJP ruled Delhi between 1993 and 1998 when the party had three chief ministers--Madan Lal Khurana, Sa-hib Singh Verma and Sushma Swaraj. BJP's vote share has steadily grown from over 32 per cent in 2015 to 38.5 per cent in 2020 against the AAP's over 54 per cent and 53.5 per cent respectively. This time the BJP's share jumped to 45.56 per cent, while the AAP's fell to 43.57 per cent. In the run up to the Delhi elections, the RSS went all out to persuade voters elect an "effective and accountable" government contributing to the BJP's thumping victory. RSS volunteers carried out a silent voter awareness campaign and held "thousands of drawing room meetings" across Delhi to attack Kejriwal over cleanliness, potable water supply, inadequate healthcare services, air pollution and cleaning of Yamuna river, according to sources. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said he accepts the mandate of Delhi and said he will fight for Delhi's progress and against pollution, price rise and corruption.—*PTI*

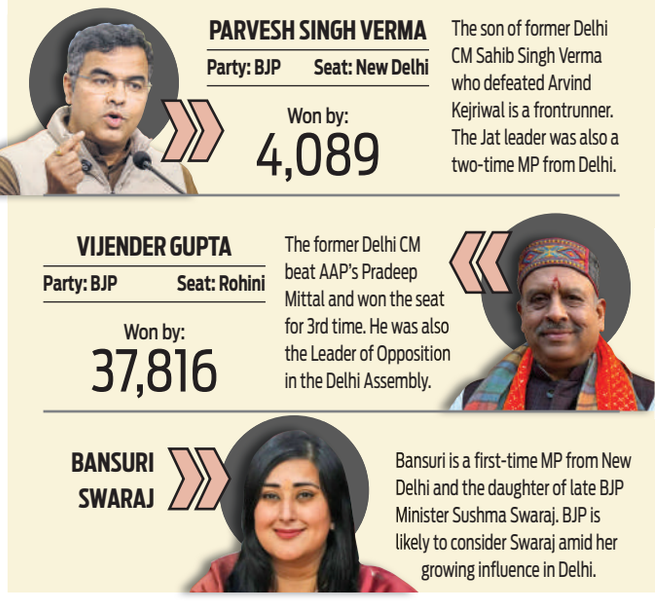
>>>More on Pages 2, 3, 4

DELHI'S VERDICT

SEATS WON	
BJP	48
AAP	22
Cong	0
MAJORITY 36	

Total seats 70

WHO WILL SIT ON CM's THRONE?



ATISHI
Party: AAP Seat: Kalkaji
Won by: 3,521

AMANATULLAH KHAN
Party: AAP Seat: Okhla
Won by: 23,639

KARNAIL SINGH
Party: BJP Seat: Shakur Basti
Won by: 20,998

ARVIND KEJRIWAL
Party: AAP Seat: New Delhi
Lost by: 4,089

MANISH SISODIA
Party: AAP Seat: Jangpura
Lost by: 675

RAMESH BIDHURI
Party: BJP Seat: Kalkaji
Lost by: 3,521

PARVESH SINGH VERMA
Party: BJP Seat: New Delhi
Won by: 4,089
The son of former Delhi CM Sahib Singh Verma who defeated Arvind Kejriwal is a frontrunner. The Jat leader was also a two-time MP from Delhi.

VIJENDER GUPTA
Party: BJP Seat: Rohini
Won by: 37,816
The former Delhi CM beat AAP's Pradeep Mittal and won the seat for 3rd time. He was also the Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly.

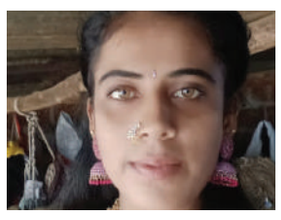
BANSURI SWARAJ
Bansuri is a first-time MP from New Delhi and the daughter of late BJP Minister Sushma Swaraj. BJP is likely to consider Swaraj amid her growing influence in Delhi.

WITH MILKIPUR WIN, BJP AVENGES AYODHYA LS LOSS

BJP candidate Chandrabhanu Paswan on Saturday won the Milkipur bypolls by 61,710 votes to avenge its humiliating defeat in the Faizabad (Ayodhya) Lok Sabha seat. While Paswan, 38, polled over 1.46 lakh votes, his nearest rival SP's Ajit Prasad, 42, garnered 84,687 votes. With this, all five Assembly segments of Faizabad Lok Sabha seat are in BJP's kitty. Samajwadi Party (SP) Chief Akhilesh Yadav had alleged voter manipulation by BJP in this seat. He said that people were intimated by BJP and IDs of minority voters were checked by cops.

Bidar dad kills girl for not marrying man of his choice

BIDAR, 8 FEB



A tragic incident occurred in Bidar district, where a father has been accused of strangling his 18-year-old daughter after she refused to marry a man chosen by the family. The shocking event took place in Baragen Tanda near Vadagaon in Aurad taluk on Friday, 7 February.

The victim, **Monica Mothiram Jadhav**, had expressed her desire to marry another man whom she loved, leading to a heated confrontation with her father, **Mothiram Jadhav**. The police reported that following the argument, Mothiram attacked Monica in a fit of rage when the house was empty and used a rope to strangle her before fleeing the scene.

District Superintendent of Police Pradeep Gunti, along with Bhalki DySP Shivanand Pavadashetty and Aurad CPI Raghuveer Singh Thakur, visited the site to conduct an investigation. A case has been registered at Santpur police station.

The incident began earlier that day when two of Monica's siblings went to school, and her parents left for work, leaving her alone with her father. At around 1.30pm, while Monica was cooking, her mother, Bha-gubai, went to fetch water. Upon returning, she found Monica struggling on the ground. Despite her attempts to help, Mothiram allegedly threatened her and struck Monica with a wooden log, resulting in her death.

Tensions had escalated weeks prior when Mothiram informed Monica that it was time to arrange her marriage, but she firmly resisted, insisting on her love for someone else. —*Salar News*

Women can claim money from 2nd husband: SC

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

The Supreme Court has held that a woman would be entitled to claim maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC from her second husband even if her previous marriage was legally subsisting.

A bench of Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma said the objective of social welfare provisions such as maintenance must be given an expansive interpretation and a strict legal interpretation should not be allowed to defeat its humanitarian purpose. Directing the second husband to pay maintenance to his estranged wife, the top court said, "When the social justice objective of maintenance is considered, we cannot, in good conscience, deny maintenance to the appellant. Social welfare provisions must be subjected to an expansive and beneficial construction."

- The court was hearing a plea filed by a woman who separated from her first husband in 2005 after signing a MoU, but with no legal decree of divorce and then later wedded her neighbour.

The court was hearing a plea by a woman who separated from her first husband in 2005 , but with no legal decree of divorce and then later wedded her neighbour. The second marriage was annulled a year later by the second husband, but the two later reconciled and remarried and had a daughter in 2008. The woman, however, filed a complaint against the second husband and his family members under the Dowry Prohibition Act and sought maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC for herself and daughter. The second husband challenged this in the Telangana High Court saying that the woman was not his legal wife as her first marriage was still legally subsisting. —*PTI*

Trump to announce 'reciprocal' tariffs on every country

WASHINGTON, 8 FEB

President Donald Trump on Friday said he would be announcing tariffs next week that match the duties im-posed by other countries, in what would be a major shift from his previous threat to impose an across-the-board tariff on all imports from across the world.

"I'll be announcing that next week, reciprocal trade, so that we're treated evenly with other countries," he told reporters at a press briefing with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba. "We don't want any more, any less." The President had previously threatened to impose a flat 10 or 20 per-cent universal tariff, and had tasked his administration with studying that possibility as part of a broader trade review due by 1 April. —*Courtesy, The Politico*

DISTANCE-BASED FARES

Metro rides get costlier with 50% hike

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

PHOTO: PTI

The Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has unveiled a revised fare structure, effective Sunday, 9 February, following suggestions from the Fare Fixation Committee (FFC). This pricing initiative seeks to maintain affordability for commuters while ensuring the financial viability of the service.

The new system introduces distance-based fares, with a minimum charge of Rs 10 for journeys up to 2 km. Fares will rise in increments of Rs 10 for every additional 2 km, reaching a maximum of Rs 90 for dis-tances beyond 30 km, up from the previous cap of Rs 60. Additionally, passengers must maintain a mini-mum balance of Rs 90 on Smart Cards.

To promote cashless payments, the FFC has announced various discounts for Smart Card users: a 5 per-cent discount on all transactions, an additional 5 per cent during off-peak hours, and a 10 per cent dis-count on Sundays and national holidays.

For tourists, BMRCL has launched special group passes, offering discounts ranging from 15 per cent for groups of 25 to 99 individuals to 25 per cent for those exceeding 1,000. However, BJP MP PC Mohan has labelled the fare hike as an "unfair burden" on commuters, calling for the introduction of monthly, quarterly, and annual passes to ease financial strains and encourage greater public transport use. With the fare changes, BMRCL anticipates an additional Rs 80 lakh in daily revenue, dependent upon passenger numbers. —*Salar News*

DISTANCE (KM)	REVISED FARE (RS)
0-2	10
2-4	20
4-6	30
6-8	40
8-10	50
10-15	60
15-20	70
20-25	80
25-30	90
More than 30	90

FOR TOURISTS

Tourist Card	Revised Fare	Group Size
1 Day	Rs 300	25 to 99
3 Day	Rs 600	100 to 1000
5 Day	Rs 800	More than 1,000

15 rowdy-sheeters arrested in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

In a decisive operation in the early hours of Saturday, the City police targeted rowdy-sheeters in North Bengaluru, resulting in the arrest of 15 individuals and the registration of 11 FIRs against them.

The operation, which took place from midnight to the early morning, was led by Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Bengaluru North, Saidulu Adavath.

During the raids, law enforcement officials seized an array of weapons, including firearms, machetes, and daggers, from the homes of several suspects.

The police are currently interrogating the arrested individuals. *—Salar News*

Bus with 50 passengers overturns in Yadgir

YADGIR, 8 FEB

A bus operated by the Kalyana Karnataka Transport Department overturned near the Adi Basavanna Temple, on the outskirts of Vadagera taluk, while travelling from Sangam to Yadgiri city on Saturday morning at 9 am. Fortunately, all more than 50 passengers, including school and college students, escaped with only minor injuries. Local reports indicate that the driver lost control while attempting to avoid a motorcyclist who had fallen on the road during an overtaking manoeuvre. Community residents and health department staff swiftly organised ambulances to transport the injured to the local community health centre. Dr. Jagannath Reddy, a medical officer, confirmed that no serious injuries were reported, although seven individuals were referred to the district hospital. A case is filed at Vadagera police station. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: X

No deputation till new recruitments: Dayananda

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

City Police Commissioner B Dayananda on Saturday announced a temporary suspension on deputation of police personnel to other units, citing an acute staff shortage. Bengaluru faces a 25-30 per cent shortfall in police personnel. "If we continue deputations, the remaining staff will be under immense pressure. Therefore, we have decided to halt all deputations temporarily," Dayananda told **Salar News**. The City has 25,307 personnel, including 18,308 civil police and 6,999 armed reserve officers—insufficient for its growing needs. Compared to other cities, Bengaluru lags in police numbers: Mumbai (32,000), Delhi (80,000), Kolkata (37,400), and Chennai (23,625) have significantly higher police-to-station ratios. He also issued a warning against officers directly approaching his office for transfers. "Some personnel have been coming directly to my office despite prior warnings," he stated. *—Salar News*

City faces heavy traffic ahead of mega event

People are urged to plan their travel ahead as Aero India, Global Investors Summit may cause jams

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

Bengaluru witnessed massive traffic congestion on Saturday as the City braced for two major events—the Aero India Show 2025 and the Global Investors Summit here. The heavy influx of visitors, delegates, and participants led to severe bottlenecks, particularly around Yelahanka and Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) leaving commuters stranded for hours.

With the much-anticipated Aero India Show set to commence on 10 February at the Yelahanka Air Station, the surrounding areas are already feeling the impact. Several videos circulating on social media showed a 5kms long traffic jam, as vehicles crawled through choked roads in Yelahanka on Saturday morning.

In response, the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) issued an alert, urging commuters to cooperate. "Severe traffic congestion at BSF Campus Yelahanka Air Force towards Airport Road. Commuters are requested to cooperate," the police said.

Passengers heading to KIA were advised to plan their journeys well in advance to avoid potential delays. BTP further recommended alternative routes, including Hennur Cross and Bagalur Road, which lead to the airport's south gate, to ease the congestion.

Rehearsals for the biennial Aero India Show have already begun, adding to the vehicular chaos. The event, which attracts defence personnel, aviation enthusiasts, and industry leaders from across the globe, is expected to impact flight operations. Airlines have also notified the passengers regarding possible delays or cancellations in the coming days.

The government has scheduled the Global Investors Summit around the same time. With high-profile attendees and increased vehicular movement, the City's already burdened infrastructure is expected to face more strain. Hotels in Bengaluru are reportedly fully booked, indicating a further rise in the number of visitors. *—Salar News*

People take selfies infront of Tejas fighter jet ahead of Aero India 2025 at Minsk Square in Bengaluru on Saturday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Rajnath, RaGa to attend Global Investors Meet

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

Rajnath Singh ***PHOTO: PTI***

Union Ministers including Rajnath Singh and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi are expected to participate in the Global Investors Meet 2025 to be inaugurated on 11 February, Minister MB Patil said on Saturday.

According to the Large and Medium Industries Minister, the State is expecting investments to the tune of Rs 10 lakh crore across key sectors.

The Minister outlined a bold vision for State's industrial and economic future. Scheduled from 12–14 February, with an inaugural event on 11 February, the summit will spotlight State's strategic position as an innovation and investment hub, while fostering global partnerships across industries.

Patil's office said that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Consumer Affairs Pralhad Joshi, and Union Minister of Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy are expected to participate in the inauguration and summit. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will preside over the inaugural function. "With collaborations spanning 18 countries and nine dedicated country pavilions, the summit will foster critical technology and innovation exchange at a global scale," they stated.

He also announced the first-ever Invest Karnataka Awards recognising 14 pioneering industries that have shaped the state's industrial growth. *—PTI*

BEL signs deal worth ₹610 cr with Navy

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

Navratna Defence Public Sector Undertaking Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) on Saturday said it has signed a contract valued at Rs 610 crore for the supply of Electro Optic Fire Control System (EOFCS) for the Indian Navy.

This fully indigenously developed system will be installed and integrated onboard Indian Naval platforms, the company said in a release.

The system is capable of panoramic/sector search, tracking all types of targets during day/night and engages the tracked targets with the medium range and short range gun mounts, it said.

Additionally, BEL has secured other orders valued at Rs 352 crore following the last disclosure on 28 January which comprises Anti Drone System, Fuzes, Integrated Fire Detection and Suppression System, Vessel Communication System, Spares, Services, etc, the company said. With these, BEL has now accumulated orders totalling Rs 11,855 crore in the current financial year, it added. *—PTI*

BEL has now accumulated orders totalling Rs 11,855 crore in the current financial year ***PHOTO: X/ @SPOKESPERSONMOD***

State BJP celebrates Kejri's 'loss of face'

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

BJP burst into celebration following the party's thumping victory in the Delhi Assembly election.

The party said the people of Delhi have reposed faith in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

"This election result is a loss of face for former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal whose party had come to power with anti-corruption as its poll plank. The defeat has exposed Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia," BJP state president BY Vijayendra said.

His father and former chief minister BS Yediyurappa congratulated the BJP national president JP Nadda for the party's resounding victory.

"Congratulations to our National President JP Nadda on the historic victory in the Delhi Assembly elections. After 27 years, BJP returns to power - a remarkable feat under the leadership of Modi and your guidance as our party president," he said on X.

The win in Delhi reflects BJP's deep connect with the people and its unmatched organisational strength, Yediyurappa noted.

"I congratulate you for galvanising tens of thousands of dedicated karyakartas, ensuring BJP remains a disciplined, mission-driven force. Their tireless efforts on the ground helped party's message and policies to reach every household. A proud moment for the party and the nation," he said. The party workers distributed sweets and burst crackers at BJP's state headquarters Jagannath Bhavan. *—PTI*

BJP State President BY Vijayendra after BJP's win in Delhi elections in Bengaluru on Saturday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Lotus will bloom in Karnataka soon, says Yaduveer

MYSURU, 8 FEB

Member of Parliament Yaduveer Krishnadutta Chamaraja Wadiyar has predicted that the BJP will retake power in Karnataka's upcoming assembly elections, akin to its recent success in New Delhi. Wadiyar attributed the BJP's victory in the capital to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies and a strategic campaign. He also highlighted public dissatisfaction with the AAP government due to corruption allegations against its leaders. BJP MLA T S Srivatsa echoed this sentiment, asserting that voters would reject the "corrupt" Congress government, citing CM Siddaramaiah's involvement in the MUDA scam. *—Salar News*

Belagavi inspector protests against SI with father's body

BELAGAVI, 8 FEB

In a dramatic protest outside the Harugeri police station on Friday night, Devadurga police station circle inspector Ashok Sadalagi alleged that sub inspector Malappa Pujari was responsible for the death of his father, Annappa Sadalagi. The family laid the deceased's body before the police station to demand action against the officer.

Inspector Sadalagi claimed that his father had been assaulted on 10 January by individuals identified as Babu Nadoni, Pratap Haroli, and Vasant Chougala, who had trespassed on the family's agricultural land in Raibag taluk. Following the incident, Annappa reportedly contacted emergency services through helpline number 112 to seek police help. Instead of filing a complaint against the assailants, Sadalagi's father was allegedly detained at the police station from morning until evening, during which time he suffered from distress due to the situation, leading to a significant deterioration in his health.

Inspector Sadalagi stated that despite informing the Harugeri police sub inspector and circle inspector of his father's condition, instead of taking appropriate action, PSI Pujari allegedly filed a false atrocity case against Sadalagi's brother. Following his father's admission to a private hospital in Belagavi, Annappa Sadalagi died on Friday afternoon.

In response to these allegations, Belagavi superintendent of police Bhimashankar Guled stated that Annappa Sadalagi's death was due to pre-existing health issues, including heart problems. *—Salar News*

Jayalalithaa's niece moves SC over confiscated assets

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

J Deepa, niece of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, has approached the Supreme Court to contest a 13 January ruling by the Karnataka High Court. The High Court had declined to restore movable and immovable assets seized in connection with a multi-crore disproportionate assets case against Jayalalithaa.

In her legal appeal against the High Court's decision, Deepa asserts that Jayalalithaa's heirs are entitled to reclaim the properties seized during the prosecution. *—ANI*

Govt to resend MFI ordinance to Guv with clarifications

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

Following the return of an ordinance aimed at protecting borrowers from harassment by microfinance institutions (MFIs) by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, Home Minister G Parameshwara announced plans to address the Governor's observations and resubmit the ordinance for approval.

The Karnataka Micro Finance (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Ordinance 2025, which includes stringent penalties such as imprisonment for up to ten years and fines of up to Rs 500,000, was developed in response to a troubling increase in suicides and numerous complaints regarding aggressive loan recovery practices by MFIs.

Gehlot critiqued the ordinance, highlighting that proposed penalties appeared excessive when compared to existing laws governing similar offences. He pointed out that with the maximum loan amount capped at Rs 300,000, a fine of Rs 500,000 contradicts basic fairness principles. The Governor also recommended that the state deliberates thoroughly on the matter during the upcoming budget session in March, rather than rushing the ordinance. He also recommended that State deliberates on the matter during the budget session. *—PTI*

Two sites for second B'luru airport by 17 Feb: MB Patil

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

Infrastructure Minister, MB Patil, announced on Saturday that two sites have been shortlisted for the proposed second airport in Bengaluru. The proposal is set to be submitted to the Airport Authority of India (AAI) by 17 February.

Patil indicated that the decision on the site selection will be based strictly on "merit" rather than political considerations. The two possible locations under consideration are Nelamangala and Kanakapura Road, amidst four initial contenders.

"There is no confusion regarding the second airport; we have narrowed it down to two sites after one briefing with the Chief Minister. A further briefing will be conducted, and the proposal will be sent to the AAI either before or shortly after the Global Investors Meet," Patil stated.

He emphasised that the decision prioritises the interests of the state, the people of Bengaluru, and local businesses, assuring that it would not be politically motivated.

He elaborated that if both sites are approved by the AAI, the state government will need to select one, considering multiple factors, including investment viability. He estimated that the land required could cost around Rs 10,000 crore.

The exclusivity clause for the Airport at Devanahalli expires in 2033, and its capacity of 100 million passengers is anticipated to be reached by 2030. "With good intention, we have commenced preparations early. If we start now, it will take seven to eight years," Patil concluded. *—PTI*

AERO INDIA SEMINAR

No glitches in SpaDeX, moving step by step: ISRO

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

The Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), V Narayanan, has confirmed that there are no technical issues with the agency's maiden space docking mission, SpaDeX, despite some media reports suggesting otherwise. Speaking to PTI on the sidelines of the 15th Biennial Edition of the Aero India International Seminar, Narayanan stated, "No glitches, right now it is docked. We are going step by step. We are studying and then we are planning to do a lot of experiments."

On 16 January, ISRO successfully executed the docking of two satellites as part of this Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) and announced that controlling both satellites as a single entity post-docking was accomplished successfully. The NVS-02 navigation satellite was also successfully injected into its intended Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit.

V Narayanan ***PHOTO: PTI***

However, on 2 February, ISRO released an update indicating that the orbit-raising operations to position the satellite into its designated orbital slot could not be executed due to failed valve openings necessary for oxidizer admission to fire the thrusters. Recent reports have suggested that the docking process might be encountering technical challenges, as the two spacecraft involved, SDX-01 and SDX-02, have yet to undock.

Narayanan previously noted that the review of the undocking procedure is ongoing, and the execution of this move might take some time. *—PTI*

ISRO successfully conducts cryogenic engine ignition trial

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced the successful ignition trial of its indigenous CE20 cryogenic engine, which is set to power the upper stage of the LVM3 rocket. Conducted on Friday at the High Altitude Test Facility within the ISRO Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu, this trial used a multi-element igniter under vacuum conditions, replicating the engine ignition environment in space. This testing is critical for the Gaganyaan mission. During the trial, the ignition of the engine's thrust chamber was performed under tank pressure conditions expected during airborne restart scenarios. ISRO reported that the engine and facility performed as anticipated throughout the trial. The CE20 engine is already qualified for thrust levels between 19t and 22t for Gaganyaan mission.

BIG WINNERS

TARVINDER SINGH MARWAH
BJP — Jangpura
Won by: 675 Votes

SATISH UPADHYAY
BJP — Malviya Nagar
Won by: 2,131

KAPIL MISHRA
BJP — KARAWAL NAGAR
Won by: 23,355

REKHA GUPTA
BJP — SHALIMAR BAGH
Won by: 29,595

SHIKHA ROY
BJP — GREATER KAILASH
Won by: 3,188

MOHAN SINGH BISHT
BJP — MUSTAFABAD
Won by: 17,578

IMRAN HUSSAIN
AAP — BALLIMARAN
Won by: 29,823

PUNARDEEP SINGH SAWHNEY
AAP — CHANDNI CHOWK
Won by: 16,572

Clockwise from top left: BJP winner from New Delhi Parvesh Verma celebrates, while AAP leader Manish Sisodia leaves the counting centre after loss; BJP supporters celebrate the party's win in Delhi

HIGH ON EGO, INDIA BLOC 'FRIENDS' TURN FOES TO SELF-DESTRUCT

While Cong attacked AAP over corruption, SP & TMC backed Kejri's party

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

Just eight months after its good showing in Lok Sabha polls, INDIA bloc runs out of steam with internal bickering and conflicting ambitions resulting in diminishing electoral returns that have once again put the BJP in the driver's seat in national politics.

With AAP's Delhi defeat, the number of INDIA bloc governments has come down to eight—Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

INDIA was formed in the run-up to Lok Sabha polls with parties coming together to defeat BJP.

INDIA parties had repeatedly insisted that the alliance was for national polls and later it would be on a state-by-state basis. However, it had not envisioned that the electoral fights in the states could get nasty, leading to cracks in the overall alliance. The Delhi polls have been a case in point.

Congress, the largest constituent of INDIA, ran against AAP, leading to bad blood between the two parties.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra launched a no-holds-barred attack on AAP and its convener Arvind Kejriwal with jibes like "architect of the liquor scam" and "sheesh mahal" being a regular feature in their campaign speeches.

SP and TMC threw their weight behind AAP saying it was best-suited to take on BJP.

The rift in the INDIA bloc is growing as seen in Haryana polls when Congress and AAP failed to strike an alliance and in Delhi where the two parties took on each other.

Though INDIA seems to be intact for the Bihar polls, the West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh elections in the coming years would test the alliance again.

The unease in the bloc and the consequences of bickering were being felt with many leaders voicing their disappointment with the result.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah passed a snide remark. "Aur lado aapas mein!!! (Keep on fighting each other)," Abdullah posted on X with a meme.

Expressing strong disappointment, CPI(M) and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) said the differences in the INDIA bloc paved the way for the saffron party's good show in the national capital.

The Marxist party vehemently attacked Congress and accused them of facilitating the victory of the BJP in Delhi.

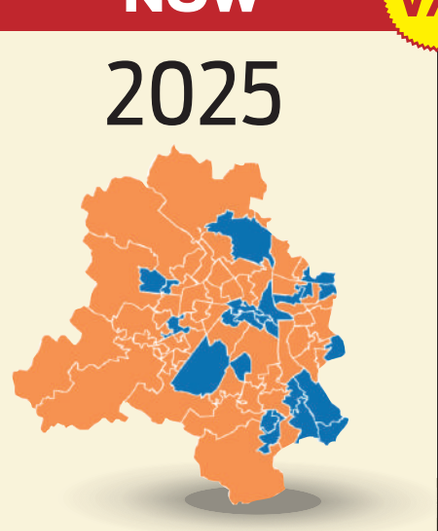
The IUML opted not to directly criticise the grand-old party but made it clear that if the INDIA bloc had fought the election unitedly, they could have resisted the saffron party.

Senior CPI(M) leader and the convener of the ruling LDF, TP Ramakrishnan, alleged that Congress did not support well for the effective functioning of INDIA.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Saturday said a Congress-AAP alliance would have crushed the BJP in Delhi assembly polls, as counting trends show the Arvind Kejriwal-led party losing many seats amid the saffron surge. —*PTI*

VOTE SHARE	
BJP	(45.56%)
AAP	(43.57%)
INC	(6.34%)
OTHER	(2.90%)
JD (U)	(1.06%)
NOTA	(0.57%)

NOW	V/S	THEN
2025		2020



BJP: **48 seats** | AAP: **22 seats**
Cong: **0 seat**

AAP: **62 seats** | BJP: **8 seats**
Cong: **0 seat**

BIG LOSERS

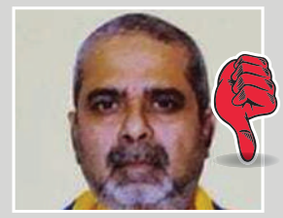
SATYENDAR JAIN
AAP — Shakur Basti
Lost by: 20,998 Votes

SAURABH BHARADWAJ
AAP — Greater Kailash
Lost by: 3,188

SANDEEP DIKSHIT
INC — NEW DELHI
Lost by: 25,520

DUSHYANT GAUTAM
BJP — KAROL BAGH
Lost by: 7,430

ARIBA KHAN
INC — OKHLA
Lost by: 52,564



AWADH OJHA
AAP — PATPARGANJ
Lost by: 28,072

ALKA LAMBA
INC — KALKAJI
Lost by: 47,762

HAROON YUSUF
INC — Ballimaran
Lost by: 43,945

WHY BJP TRIUMPHED OVER AAP & CONG

BJP WOOS MIDDLE CLASS AND WOMEN TO WIN DELHI

1. BJP wooed the middle class and poor by saying schemes run by AAP will not be stopped.
2. BJP manifesto promised free electricity and subsidies such as Rs 2,500 for poor women & Rs 500 subsidy on LPG cylinders.
3. Split in India bloc members AAP and Congress.
4. BJP used the "Modi ki guarantee" narrative to fight Kejriwal's stronghold.
5. Delhi's 48% population is women. BJP's campaign was focused on wooing them with promises such as Rs 21,000 aid to pregnant moms.

ARREST OF LEADERS COST AAP

1. BJP targeted AAP over corruption & liquor policy, calling it "AAP-da" (calamity. It accused Kejriwal of misusing funds for building Rs 75-80 crore "Sheesh Mahal" residence.)
2. Mired in corruption charges and arrest of key leaders such as Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh. Released on bail between August and October, the delay hindered AAP's election campaign.
3. AAP faced criticism for poor governance, marked by worsening air pollution, crumbling infrastructure, water crisis and Yamuna pollution.
4. Councillors were dissatisfied with inaction in improving infrastructure despite AAP being in power in MCD. This is one issue AAP could not blame BJP about.
5. BJP accused AAP of providing refuge to infiltrators and Rohingyas in Delhi.

CONG LACKED PLANNING

1. Declining vote share and disconnect with voters.
2. No strong local leader to rival Kejriwal or BJP.
3. Overshadowed by BJP and AAP's dominance.
4. Internal infighting and power struggles weakened competitiveness.
5. Lack of clear planning and strategy to connect with voters.

KAILASH GAHLOT, BJP
Previous party: Cong
Seat: Bijwasan
Won by:
11,276

ARVINDER SINGH LOVELY, BJP
Previous party: Cong
Seat: Gandhinagar
Won by:
12,748

MAJINDER SINGH SIRSA, BJP
Previous party: Akali Dal
Seat: Rajouri Garden
Won by:
18,190

JITENDRA SINGH SHUNTY, AAP
Previous party: BJP
Seat: Shahdara
Lost by:
5,178

RAAJ KUMAR ANAND, BJP
Previous party: AAP
Seat: Patel Nagar
Lost by:
4,049

DEVENDRA SEHRAWAT, CONG
Previous party: AAP
Seat: Bijwasan
Lost by:
55,542

'Bribes', broken roads & blunders haunt AAP

Kejri, Sisodia & Jain were jailed over corruption charges though they came to power on anti-corruption plank

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

Allegations of corruption against its leaders, constant bickering with the lieutenant governor over governance issues and a spirited campaign conducted by the BJP were enough to ensure a rout of the AAP in the Delhi Assembly polls, the results of which were declared on Saturday.

What will be more hurtful for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is the fact that its top guns -- Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain -- suffered defeats in their constituencies, a major setback for the party that had come to power on the anti-corruption plank.

The "kattar imandaar" image of the party took a major beating due to the arrest of its senior leaders in various corruption cases.

The BJP's constant attacks on AAP supremo Kejriwal over the issue of renovation of the chief minister's residence, which it referred to as Sheesh Mahal, also paved the way for the party's loss in the keenly-contested polls.

The defeats of Kejriwal, Sisodia and Jain mean that the AAP cannot even claim moral victory in the polls that have seen the BJP returning to power in Delhi after a gap of more than 26 years.

Another factor that might have tilted the scales in favour of the BJP was the AAP government's constant tussle with Delhi LG V K Saxena over governance issues.

Right from the cleaning of drains to stopping schemes like the doorstep delivery of services, the AAP government would always lay the blame on the LG or the BJP-led Centre for creating obstacles in governance. —*PTI*

A man dressed as AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal with liquor bottles hanging around his neck and broom in hand reacts to the party's defeat in the Delhi Assembly Election, at BJP Headquarters in New Delhi on Saturday **PHOTO: ANI**

Congress' third consecutive drought in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

The Congress party faced another devastating defeat in the Delhi assembly elections, failing to secure a single seat in the 70-member assembly for the third consecutive time. Key candidates experienced crushing defeats, though the party did register a slight improvement in its vote share.

The party's only consolation came from its vote share, increasing from 4.3 per cent in 2020 to 6.39 per cent. Leaders expressed confidence in winning back public trust and forming a government by 2030. However, notable figures like Sandeep Dikshit—son of late chief minister Sheila Dikshit—finished third in the New Delhi constituency.

The majority of Congress candidates lost their deposits, with only three retaining them.

Despite this poor performance, Congress leaders remain committed to rebuilding the party's presence, with hopes of reclaiming its past glory in future elections, particularly in Punjab in 2027. —*PTI*

Delhi CM Atishi after winning her seat over BJP's Ramesh Bidhuri in Assembly elections, in New Delhi, Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

AAP'S BATTLE ANGEL ATISHI

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

Atishi, who took office as chief minister last year, retained her seat in the Delhi Assembly elections amidst a challenging climate for her party, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Initially dubbed a "temporary CM" due to her predecessor Arvind Kejriwal's presence, Atishi's leadership has solidified following her success in Kalkaji, where she defeated BJP rival Ramesh Bidhuri by a margin of 3,521 votes.

The contest proved to be contentious, with Bidhuri's remarks regarding Atishi's surname change igniting controversy. During a press conference, Atishi emotionally accused Bidhuri of stooping low by attacking her elderly father. This incident appears to have resonated with voters, contributing to her victory.

Atishi's educational background includes a degree from St. Stephen's College and further studies at Oxford University. After advising on education reforms under Manish Sisodia, she faced a setback in the 2019 elections. —*PTI*

4 Muslims make it to Assembly

New Delhi, 8 FEB

Delhi Assembly polls saw a division of Muslim votes but despite that the AAP managed to win six out of the seven seats which have a substantial population of the community. A total of four Muslim candidates made it to the Delhi Assembly, down from five last time. The four winning Muslim candidates are Imran Hussain (AAP) from Ballimaran, Aaley Mohammed Iqbal (AAP) from Matia Mahal, Amanatullah Khan (AAP) from Okhla and Chaudhary Zubair Ahmad (AAP) from Seelampur. The AIMIM candidate Tahir Hussain finished third. —*PTI*

> Congrats to Rahul Gandhi for winning the election for BJP, yet again! Well done

-KT Rama Rao, BRS Working President

> End to reign of lies, deceit; start of new era of development

-Amit Shah, Union Home Minister

'AAP drowned due to focus on money'

MUMBAI, 8 FEB

As the BJP on Saturday headed to capture Delhi seat of power after more than 26 years, activist **Anna Hazare**, once a mentor to Arvind Kejriwal said AAP "drowned" due to the liquor policy and its focus on money.

In a jibe at Kejriwal, the anti-graft activist further said a candidate's character should be clean and he should know the virtues of sacrifice.

> With the liquor policy issue came the money and AAP drowned in it
>
> -Anna Hazare, Activist

The Aam Aadmi Party, born from Hazare's anti-corruption crusade, is trailing behind the Bharatiya Janata Party as votes are being counted for the 70-member Delhi assembly polls held earlier this week.

"With the liquor policy issue came the money and they drowned in it. The (AAP's) image was tarnished. People saw him (Arvind Kejriwal) talking about clean character and then about liquor," Hazare, who led the anti-corruption movement in 2011, told reporters in Ralegan Siddhi village. —*PTI*

> Delhi poll outcome: people voted for change, they were fed up

-Priyanka Gandhi, Congress MP

> Delhi me AAP-da ki Vidai (Delhi bids farewell to disaster)

-Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister

Maliwal's 'Draupadi's cheer haran' jibe at AAP

Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal shares a picture of Draupadi's 'cheer haran' from the Mahabharat against AAP **PHOTO: X**

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

Sharing a picture of Draupadi's "cheer haran" from the Maharbharat, Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal said the Aam Aadmi Party and its party chief Arvind Kejriwal's "arrogance" led to their loss in the Delhi assembly polls.

"Even Ravan's arrogance did not last," Maliwal, who fell out with the AAP last year, said in another post on X.

Maliwal's post on Draupadi's "cheer haran" or "stripping" from the Mahabharat is a reference to her allegations that a close aide of Kejriwal assaulted her inside the CM's residence. This was when Kejriwal was still the chief minister of Delhi.

- Even Ravan's arrogance did not last, Maliwal, who fell out with the AAP last year, said in a post on X

Maliwal's posts came after trends of the Delhi assembly poll results showed the BJP ahead of AAP and heading towards forming the government in the national capital.

Even two-time former CM Kejriwal was trailing on his New Delhi seat. —*PTI*

NOTA OUTSHINES 2 NATIONAL PARTIES

Voters in Delhi preferred the 'none of the above' option over two national parties, BSP and CPI(M), emerging election results data shows. As votes for the Delhi assembly polls were counted on Saturday, latest data of the Election Commission showed that NOTA option got 0.57 per cent vote share as compared to 0.55 pet cent of the Bahujan Samaj Party and 0.01 per cent of CPI(M).

Delhi BJP vs LG: SC battles heat up

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

The Delhi government is currently engaged in several litigations against the Lieutenant Governor (LG) in the Supreme Court, including a challenge to a recent Central law that strengthens the LG's authority over the city's elected administration, particularly in service matters.

This legal tussle includes the government's objections to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2023, which grants the LG extensive powers over administrative services.

As the BJP prepares to assume power in the national capital, the outcome of these cases could be pivotal. Key petitions filed by the Delhi government address various issues, such as the appointment of the chairperson of the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission and the LG's contentious approval of a training programme for government school teachers in Finland. —*PTI*

FIR against RaGa for 'anti-national' remark in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR, 8 FEB

An FIR has been registered against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Odisha's Jharsuguda district for allegedly making an "anti-national" statement, a senior police officer said.

The complaint alleged that Gandhi has been deliberately making anti-national statements which hurt each and every Indian individual. The FIR was registered on Friday based on a complaint lodged by members of BJP, RSS, and Bajrang Dal. —*PTI*

Rashtrapati Bhavan guard change to have new format

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

The change of guard ceremony will now be held in a new format with increased seating capacity, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said on Saturday. In the new format, people can witness a dynamic visual and musical performance with the backdrop of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, it said. The ceremony will comprise display of formal military drills by the troops and horses of the President's Bodyguard and the troops of the Ceremonial Guard Battalion, along with the Ceremonial Military Brass Band. The change of guard ceremony will take place from 22 February. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

PDP's Iltija Mufti & Mehbooba under house arrest again

SRINAGAR, 8 FEB

People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader Iltija Mufti claimed that she and her mother, party chief Mehbooba Mufti, had been placed under house arrest.

In a social media post, Iltija Mufti said she had intended to visit Kathua while Mehbooba Mufti planned to visit Sopore to meet the bereaved family of the truck driver killed in army firing on Wednesday.

"My mother and I both have been placed under house arrest. Our gates have been locked up because she was meant to visit Sopore where Waseem Mir was shot dead by the army," Iltija Mufti said on X.

"I intended to visit Kathua to meet Makhan Din's family and I am not being allowed to even move out. Nothing has changed in Kashmir even after elections. Now even comforting the families of victims is being criminalised," she added. —*PTI*

BY-ELECTIONS 2025

BJP's Paswan defeats SP with 61,000 votes in Milkipur

AYODHYA, 8 FEB

BJP candidate Chandrabhanu Paswan on Saturday won the Milkipur bypolls by a margin of 61,710 votes, according to the Election Commission website.

While Paswan, 38, polled over 1.46 lakh votes, his nearest rival Samajwadi Party's Ajit Prasad, 42, garnered 84,687 votes, it said.

After 31 rounds of counting, Paswan with 1,46,397 votes registered a win.

With the BJP winning the Milkipur (SC) seat, all five assembly segments of the Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency are in the BJP's kitty.

The other assembly segments are Rudauli, Bikapur and Ayodhya in Ayodhya district and Rudauli assembly segment of Barabanki.

Milkipur was the only seat the BJP lost in Ayodhya district in the 2022 Assembly polls.

BJP workers celebrate the party's victory in the Delhi Assembly election and UP's Milkipur by-election, in Varanasi, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

The Milkipur bypoll was necessitated after local MLA Awadhesh Prasad vacated the seat following his Faizabad win in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav on the other hand accused the BJP of "misusing" the electoral machinery to win.

"The true victory of PDA (Picchda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) in Ayodhya in the Lok Sabha elections is many times greater than their false victory in Milkipur Assembly." —*PTI*

DMK wins Erode East, eyes 2026 TN Assembly polls

ERODE, 8 FEB

The ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu extended its winning run in elections on Saturday by emerging victorious in the Erode East bypoll with a massive margin against actor-politician Seeman's NTK, a victory that should come as a major boost to the M K Stalin-led party ahead of next year's Assembly elections.

DMK's V C Chandhirakumar trounced Naam Tamilar Katchi's (NTK) M K Seethalakshmi by a margin of 91,558 votes. In the process, NTK, a Tamil nationalist organisation, forefeited deposit.

With 44 other candidates--most of them independents, in fray, NOTA (None of the Above) grabbed the third place with 6,109 votes.

Chandhirakumar polled 1,15,709 votes while Seethalakshmi came a distant second with 24,151 votes.

DMK candidate VC Chandirakumar addresses media during the counting of votes for the Erode East Assembly polls, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

The winning candidate later said the DMK has secured "75 per cent of the votes."

"I dedicate this victory to the Chief Minister (Stalin). People have reposed faith in the DMK, the CM and deputy CM (Udhayanidhi Stalin)," he told reporters.

The victory sparked jubilation among DMK supporters in Erode and elsewhere. At the party headquarters, DMK workers celebrated the win by bursting crackers. —*PTI*

Doctor assaulted after patient's death; 3 booked

THANE, 8 FEB

A 24-year-old doctor was attacked by the relatives of a patient following her death at a private hospital in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said on Saturday. Based on a complaint by the doctor, the Chitalsar police have registered a case against three persons involved in the attack on the afternoon of 5 February, an official said. The victim, Dr Nitin Anil Tiwari, was treating a 30-year-old woman who subsequently died, and angered by her death, the patient's relatives accused the medical team of negligence. The official said the accused verbally abused and threatened the doctor, and one of them hit him with a steel chair and injured him. *—PTI*

ACB files DA case against Telangana official, seizes ₹4 cr

HYDERABAD, 8 FEB

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Telangana has initiated a Disproportionate Assets (DA) case against the Deputy Transport Commissioner of Warangal district, uncovering assets valued at over Rs 4 crore allegedly linked to him and his family. The investigation stems from allegations that the official amassed wealth beyond his known sources of income through corrupt practices during his tenure. ACB officials conducted searches at his residence and various locations associated with him and his relatives, discovering documentation related to properties, including houses, open plots, and agricultural land. *—PTI*

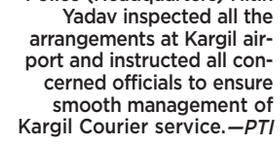


PHOTO:ANI

AN-32 Kargil service airlifts 24 stranded passengers

KARGIL, 8 FEB

Twenty-four stranded passengers were airlifted by Indian Air Force (IAF) between Kargil and Srinagar on Saturday, marking the commencement of AN-32 Kargil courier service, a lifeline to the Union Territory of Ladakh during winter months. On the first day, 12 passengers travelled in the AN-32 Kargil courier service from Kargil to Srinagar and an equal number between Srinagar to Kargil, an official said. The Kargil courier service operates on Kargil-Srinagar and Kargil-Jammu routes on selected days to facilitate the passengers who are stranded due to closure of Srinagar-Leh national highway owing to heavy snowfall. Meanwhile, Kargil Deputy Commissioner Shrikant Balasaheb Suse and Deputy Superintendent of Police (Headquarters) Nitin Yadav inspected all the arrangements at Kargil airport and instructed all concerned officials to ensure smooth management of Kargil Courier service. *—PTI*

SC issues notice to Chhota Rajan on CBI plea in murder case

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea filed by the CBI challenging a Bombay High Court order that suspended the life sentence of gangster Chhota Rajan in the 2021 murder case of hotelier Jaya Shetty and granted him bail. A three-judge bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sanjay Karol and Sandeep Mehta issued notice to Rajan and sought his response within four weeks. In May last year, a special court convicted Rajan for murdering Shetty and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Shetty, who owned the Golden Crown hotel at Gamdevi in central Mumbai, was shot dead by two members of Rajan's gang on the hotel's first floor on May 4, 2001. Rajan, already serving a life term for the murder of veteran crime reporter J Dey. *—PTI*

Arrest invalid if accused not informed of charges: SC

Violations of this fundamental right entitles accused to bail

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

Supreme Court has ruled that failure to inform an arrested individual of the reasons for their arrest violates Article 22(1) of the Constitution, rendering the arrest invalid. The verdict was delivered in the case of Vihaan Kumar vs State of Haryana.

The Bench, comprising Justices Abhay S Oka and N Kotishwar Singh, stated that compliance with Article 22(1) is mandatory. Any non-compliance would invalidate not only the arrest but also subsequent judicial remand orders. The ruling emphasised that violations of this fundamental right entitle the accused to bail, regardless of statutory restrictions.

"When a violation of Article 22(1) is established, courts must order the immediate release of the accused. Statutory restrictions do not override the fundamental rights guaranteed by Articles 21 and 22," the Court asserted.

Grounds of arrest must be given not only to the accused, but to his friends, relatives or a person nominated by arrested person as well **PHOTO: PTI**

However, while an illegal arrest does not nullify investigations, charge sheets, or trials, filing a charge sheet cannot retroactively validate an unconstitutional arrest.

Justice Singh further noted that arrest details must be shared with the accused's relatives or nominated individuals as per Section 50A of the CrPC. This ensures those close to the accused can take legal action to protect their rights.

In a separate concurring opinion, Justice Singh added that the grounds of arrest must be given not only to the accused, but to his friends, relatives or a person nominated by the arrested person as well.

This requirement is laid down in Section 50A of the CrPC (obligation of person making arrest to inform about the arrest to inform about the arrest, etc., to a nominated person), he observed.

This is to make the mandate under Article 22 (1) meaningful, so that the persons so informed of the grounds for arrest can take legal steps to challenge the arrest and secure the arrestee's liberty. Failure to do so may render the arrest illegal, he added. *—Agencies*

GBS cases hit 180 in Pune, Mumbai reports first case

PUNE/MUMBAI, 8 FEB

The Pune region has seen a surge in suspected cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), with the count now reaching 180 following the identification of seven new cases, while Mumbai reported its first case involving a 64-year-old woman.

Of the suspected cases in Pune, 146 have been diagnosed with GBS. The reports indicate 35 affected individuals from Pune Municipal Corporation, 88 from newly incorporated villages, 25 from Pimpri Chinchwad, and the remainder from Pune Rural and other districts. Out of this number, 79 patients have been discharged, while 58 remain in ICU, with 22 on ventilator support.

The woman from Andheri (East) in Mumbai was admitted to hospital on 21 January with a history of fever and diarrhoea, which progressed to paralysis. She is currently receiving care in an ICU, with her condition described as moderate.

Maharashtra's Health Minister, Prakash Abitkar, announced plans for new legislation aimed at ensuring clean drinking water and imposing fines on entities that pollute water supplies. The Pune Municipal Corporation and state health department are collaborating to manage the GBS outbreak, which has been linked to waterborne bacteria. Abitkar emphasised the need for proper monitoring and water treatment to prevent further cases, particularly in Nanded village, which has reported a significant number of GBS incidents. *—PTI*

The Pune Municipal Corporation and state health department are collaborating to manage the GBS outbreak **PHOTO: PTI**

- The reports indicate 35 affected individuals from Pune Municipal Corporation, 88 from newly incorporated villages, 25 from Pimpri Chinchwad, and the remainder from Pune Rural and other districts

Fire breaks out at Sabarmati rly station, none hurt

AHMEDABAD, 8 FEB

A fire erupted at the under-construction Sabarmati bullet train station in Ahmedabad early on Saturday morning, although no casualties have been reported.

The blaze started around 6.30am, prompting a prompt response from the fire department, which dispatched 13 fire tenders to the scene to bring the situation under control.

According to a statement from the National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL), the agency overseeing the project, the fire originated from the roof shuttering on one section of the construction site. Preliminary investigations suggest that welding sparks from temporary shuttering work may have caused the incident.

NHSRCL officials are actively monitoring the situation and have stated that while the precise cause of the fire is still under investigation, initial assessments point towards welding activities.

The Sabarmati station is a key component of the 508-kilometre Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project. *—PTI*

Homeland demand not negotiable: Kashmiri Pandits to Hurriyat chief

JAMMU, 8 FEB

Days after Hurriyat Conference Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq met members of the displaced Kashmiri Pandits to discuss their return to the valley, Panun Kashmir – a prominent group representing the community – on Saturday dismissed the reconciliatory as "meaningless".

The group said the struggle for a separate homeland within Kashmir where Kashmiri Hindus live with dignity will continue till "justice is served".

Mirwaiz, who is also a prominent cleric in the Kashmir Valley, recently met members of a Kashmiri Pandit group, J&K Peace Forum, in Delhi as part of renewed push to resettle the community which is living in exile in different parts of the country over the past three decades, following the eruption of militancy in the 1980s.

Mirwaiz Farooq **PHOTO:ANI**

"Panun Kashmir made it clear that there can be no return to the failed model of forced coexistence, which has only resulted in repeated genocidal attacks on Kashmiri Hindus.

It said the "era of appeasement" is over, warning that history cannot be rewritten to suit those who once "justified or remained complicit in community's persecution". *—PTI*

- The group said the struggle for a separate homeland within Kashmir where Kashmiri Hindus live with dignity will continue till "justice is served"

PROTEST AGAINST TRUMP

Members of Farm Unions burn an effigy during a protest against US President Donald Trump following his decision to deport Indian migrants, in Jalandhar, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

AMID SUSTAINABLE DVPT

Environment, carbon emission neglected: Study

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

A recent study has revealed that critical issues such as environment, carbon emissions, biodiversity, and malnutrition are being overlooked by certain groups of countries, undermining efforts to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The study, conducted by an international team of researchers from nations including Australia, China, and Israel, analysed the progress of 166 countries towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015 to promote human progress, economic growth, and planetary health.

Published in *Nature Communications*, the study identifies a "polarised global landscape" where countries cluster around distinct development targets. Lead author Asaf Tzachor from Israel's Reichman University's School of Sustainability pointed out that over the past two decades, national priorities have shifted, leading to areas of chronic neglect that require urgent action.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The research assessed SDG scores for countries from 2000 to 2022, revealing that nations with high scores excel in poverty reduction, clean energy, and health, while those with low scores struggle with issues related to overnutrition and environmental impacts. Notably, "orphaned" SDG indicators, concerning environmental quality and malnutrition, remain largely unaddressed by certain nations.

The findings underscore the need for targeted development policies to bridge these gaps. As the 2030 deadline approaches, the study emphasises the importance of international cooperation to ensure that no community is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development. *—PTI*

'Employability of Indian graduates up by 54.81%'

GANDHINAGAR, 8 FEB

The employability of Indian graduates increased significantly from 33.95 per cent in 2013 to 54.81 per cent in 2024, Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Saturday.

He attributed the improved employability to various skill-building initiatives undertaken by the government amid growing demand for skilled professionals across the globe.

Mandaviya inaugurated the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Youth Summit in Gandhinagar.

He said BIMSTEC countries present an opportunity for collective growth and development given that more than 60 per cent of their population is below 35 years and that India is committed to playing a leading role by offering its expertise, resources, and vision.

Mansukh Mandaviya **PHOTO:WIKIPEDIA**

As a result of these initiatives, the employability of Indian graduates has increased significantly in the last decade from 33.95 per cent in 2013 to 54.81 per cent in 2024, indicating a 61 per cent improvement in job readiness, he said.

India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand are members of the BIMSTEC organisation. *—PTI*

'HAS NO PREFERENCE'

Won't quash rape & POCSO cases on victim's plea: HC

KOCHI, 8 FEB

Kerala High Court has held that when serious offences of rape under the IPC or the POCSO Act are prima facie made out, then even the victim's plea for quashing the case "has no preference".

The High Court's ruling came on a plea by the victim and her mother seeking to quash the case against her dance teacher and his wife booked under various provisions of the IPC, including a section that deals with rape, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The victim in her statements to the police had narrated the various instances when the dance teacher allegedly had sexual relations with her in 2015, when she was a minor, on the promise of getting her a chance to to act in films and reality shows.

He had sex with her by promising to marry her, the victim told police.

When the dance teacher married someone else, the victim told his wife about their affair. The woman then told the victim that she too could marry the dance teacher, according to the statements the victim made to the police.

Subsequently, the wife also aided and abetted the sexual relations between the dance teacher and the victim, according to the statements to police.

The court dismissed the plea of the victim and her mother to quash the case and directed the accused to cooperate with the trial. *—PTI*

PHOTO:ANI

13-yr-old Thane girl raped; accused held

Thane, 8 FEB

A 13-year-old girl was allegedly kidnapped and raped by a man in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said on Saturday. The police on Friday apprehended the 19-year-old accused in connection with the assault that took place on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, an official said. According to the police, the girl quarrelled with her elder sister, walked out of her house on Wednesday night and went to sit by a lake in the city. *—PTI*

Five-year-old girl raped in MP's Chhatarpur; accused held

Chhatarpur, 8 FEB

A five-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a man in Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh, following which the police have arrested the accused, an official said on Saturday. The incident occurred at a village under Harpalpur police station limits, around 55 kms from the district headquarters, on Friday, he said. As per the complaint lodged by the victim's family members, the accused lured the girl with a chocolate when she was on her way to attend a feast. "After the girl went missing, her family launched a search for her. One child informed them that the victim was taken to a room by a man," a member of the victim's family said. Accordingly, the family reached the spot and rescued the girl, he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: REPRESENTATIONAL

Indian national arrested in US sexual assault case

NEW YORK, 8 FEB

An Indian national, Jaspal Singh, 29, has been arrested in Tukwila, Washington, by US immigration authorities on charges related to sexual assault. Singh faces a charge of "assault with sexual motivation," according to a recent statement from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Seattle. Three other individuals, citizens of Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador, were also detained. All four will remain in ICE custody pending removal proceedings. Drew Bostock, Director of ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations in Seattle, emphasised the agency's commitment to protecting communities and preventing further victimisation. This incident occurs amid a backdrop of intensified immigration enforcement under the Trump administration. *—PTI*

Alaska plane found, all 10 believed dead

ALASKA, 8 FEB

All ten individuals on board a missing passenger plane in Alaska are feared dead, according to the US Coast Guard, which has located the wreckage on sea ice. Initially, three bodies were discovered within the aircraft, while the remaining seven are believed to be inside but are "inaccessible due to the condition of the plane." The Cessna Caravan, operated by Bering Air, was transporting nine passengers and a pilot from Unalakleet to Nome when it lost contact shortly after takeoff. Bering Air's director of operations, David Olson, confirmed that staff are working diligently to gather information and coordinate emergency responses. Rescue efforts have been hindered by adverse weather conditions, limiting air searches, while the Nome Volunteer Fire Department conducted a ground search around Nome and White Mountain. *—DW News*

NYC closes live poultry markets amid bird flu

NEW YORK, 8 FEB

New York officials have mandated the temporary closure of all live poultry markets in New York City and three suburban counties due to recent avian flu cases. The five-day shutdown aims to allow thorough cleaning and disinfection of markets in the city and Westchester, Suffolk, and Nassau counties. Since late January, the virus has been detected in seven markets across Queens, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. Governor Kathy Hochul stated, "I have directed our state agencies to use all available resources to ensure we are taking every measure necessary to keep the risk to the public low." While the general public faces a low risk, concerns have risen following the first reported bird flu death last month.*—DW News*

Pak seeks China to reschedule $3.4B debt

ISLAMABAD, 8 FEB

Pakistan has formally requested China to reschedule a $3.4 billion debt for two years to address a foreign funding gap identified by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This marks the second request in five months for the rescheduling of loans from the Exim Bank of China. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar made the appeal during a recent visit to Beijing, seeking an extension to the repayment period from October 2024 to September 2027 while continuing interest payments. The rescheduling is critical as part of Pakistan's overall $5 billion external financing plan linked to the three-year IMF programme. Fitch Ratings has highlighted challenges in securing enough external financing.*—PTI*

US PLANS $7.4B ARMS SALE TO ISRAEL

The package includes billions in ammunitions, equipment is scheduled for delivery this year

UNITED STATES, 8 FEB

The US State Department has officially informed Congress of its intention to sell over USD 7.4 billion in weapons to Israel, including thousands of bombs and missiles. This announcement comes just days after President Donald Trump hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House.

According to the State Department, two distinct arms sales have been submitted for congressional approval. The first package, valued at USD6.75 billion, includes a variety of ammunitions and guidance kits, comprising 166 small diameter bombs, 2,800 500-pound bombs, and thousands of associated components. Deliveries for this deal are expected to commence this year. The second package involves sale of 3,000 Hellfire missiles other equipment, estimated at USD660 million, with deliveries anticipated to begin in 2028. US Defence Security Cooperation Agency said proposed sale of the bombs would enhance Israel's ability to address current and future threats and bolster its homeland defence. *—Agencies*

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with US President Donald Trump in the East Room of the White House *PHOTO: PTI*

- Second package involves sale of 3,000 Hellfire missiles estimated at USD 660 million

Judge blocks Musk's DOGE from US Treasury access

WASHINGTON, 8 FEB

A federal judge has prohibited Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) from accessing sensitive Treasury Department records that include personal data such as Social Security and bank account numbers for millions of Americans. The ruling, issued by US District Judge Paul Engelmayer, follows a lawsuit filed by 19 Democratic attorneys general against President Donald Trump. The case, presented in federal court in New York City, claims the Trump administration unlawfully granted Musk's team access to the Treasury's central payment system. This system processes tax refunds, Social Security benefits, and veterans' benefits, managing trillions of dollars annually while safeguarding an extensive array of personal and financial information. DOGE was established to identify and eliminate what the Trump administration considers wasteful government expenditure. *—PTI*

Setback for plan to put USAID workers on leave

WASHINGTON, 8 FEB

A federal judge has issued a significant ruling against President Donald Trump and billionaire ally Elon Musk, blocking efforts to displace thousands of staff from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). US District Judge Carl Nichols, appointed by Trump, imposed a temporary pause on plans to place overseas USAID workers on administrative leave and mandated they have only 30 days to return to the US—a move the judge described as exposing them and their families to unnecessary risks.

Nichols highlighted testimonies from agency employees regarding the administration's attempts to quickly shut down USAID, which included cutting off vital communication channels. "Administrative leave in Syria is not the same as administrative leave in Bethesda," he stated.

While Nichols's order protects 2,200 workers from immediate leave, he denied a request to block Trump's funding freeze on the agency. The American Foreign Service Association and the American Federation of Government Employees argued that Trump lacks the authority to dismantle USAID without Congressional approval. As they moved to erase USAID's name from its headquarters, lawmakers expressed concerns over aid programmes facing cuts. *—PTI*

'CANADA STATEHOOD TALK IS A REAL THING'

VANCOUVER, 8 FEB

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated that President Donald Trump's suggestion of making Canada the 51st US state is "a real thing," linked to the nation's abundant natural resources. He urged Canada to adopt a "tactical and strategic" approach to counter tariffs, highlighted the need for increased trade diversification.

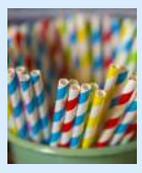
FEDERAL PRISONS TO HOUSE DETAINEES

NEW YORK, 8 FEB

President Donald Trump's administration is revisiting the strategy of detaining immigration offenders in federal prisons, a move reminiscent of his first term. The Bureau of Prisons has confirmed it is aiding US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, though details regarding the number of detainees and specific facilities remain undisclosed.

TRUMP VOWS 'BACK TO PLASTICS'

Washington DC, 8 Feb



US President Donald Trump announced plans to sign an Executive Order next week that will reverse the Biden administration's push for paper straws and head back to plastic usage. Calling the initiative "ridiculous," Trump asserted that paper straws "don't work."This comes after he signed order to once again withdraw the US from the Paris Climate Treaty.

BIDEN DEPRIVED OF SECURITY CLEARANCE

Palm Beach, 8 Feb

US President Donald Trump said he is revoking the security clearance of former president Joe Biden and ending his access to classified information. Trump wrote on Truth Social, "Joe, you're fired." Biden too had ended Trump's intelligence briefings after Trump help incite the 6 January, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

Musk to rehire ex-DOGE staff who quit over hate post

WASHINGTON DC, 8 FEB

Elon Musk said he is re-hiring a staff member at the Department of Government Efficiency who resigned a day earlier after he was linked to racist social media posts. Musk, in a post on X, said he would bring back Marko Elez after Vice President JD Vance called for him to be rehired. President Donald Trump too endorsed his VP's view.

Marko Elez resigned on Thursday after The Wall Street Journal linked the 25-year-old DOGE staff member to a deleted X account that had posted, "I was racist before it was cool" and "You could not pay me to marry outside of my ethnicity," last year among other posts such as "Normalize Indian hate."

"I obviously disagree with some of Elez's posts, but I don't think stupid social media activity should ruin a kid's life," Vance said in a post on X. The vice president's wife, Usha Vance, is the daughter of Indian immigrants.

Trump said, "I am with the Vice President." A few hours later, Musk posted, "He will be brought back. To err is human, to forgive divine."

Elez, in archives of his personal website, said he worked for SpaceX and on its Starlink satellites, and at X. *—PTI*

Hamas to release 3 Israeli hostages in Gaza truce swap

DEIR AL-BALAH, 8 FEB

Hamas militants are set to release three Israeli civilian hostages on Saturday, coinciding with Israel's plan to free dozens of Palestinian prisoners as part of a fragile ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip. The hostages—Eli Sharabi, 52; Ohad Ben Ami, 56; and Or Levy, 34—were abducted during the Hamas-led attack on Israel on 7 October, 2023, which sparked the ongoing conflict.

In total, the latest agreement includes the release of 33 hostages and nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners, aimed at increasing humanitarian aid to the beleaguered territory. This will mark the fifth exchange since the ceasefire began on January 19, with 18 hostages and over 550 Palestinian prisoners already released.

Sharabi and Ben Ami were taken from Kibbutz Beeri, while Levy was abducted from the Nova music festival. Sharabi's family suffered devastating losses during the attack, and Levy's young son has been cared for by relatives since the tragedy.

Israeli captive Eli Sharabi is escorted by Hamas fighters before being handed over to the Red Cross in Deir al-Balah on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Israel's release on Saturday includes 183 Palestinian prisoners, many serving long sentences for serious offences. The Israeli military considers these individuals as terrorists, while Palestinians often regard them as freedom fighters against occupation.

As the ceasefire continues, uncertainty looms over future negotiations, with the next phase including the potential release of more hostages in exchange for a lasting ceasefire. Tensions remain high, with threats of restarting military action if discussions do not yield results before early March. *—PTI*

'MALICIOUS ACTIVITY'

China-linked campaign targets Freeland: Canada

OTTAWA, 8 FEB

A Canadian government department monitoring foreign interference announced on Friday that it has uncovered "coordinated and malicious activity" directed at federal Liberal Party leadership candidate Chrystia Freeland.

The Rapid Response Mechanism Canada, based in Global Affairs Canada, indicated that this activity was traced to a WeChat account affiliated with the Chinese government. According to a release, the operation originated from a prominent WeChat news account, previously associated by experts at the China Digital Times with the People's Republic of China. Over 30 WeChat accounts participated in the campaign, which garnered significant levels of engagement and views.

Freeland's campaign team and the Liberal Party executive have been briefed on these findings. In response, Freeland took to X on Friday evening, asserting, "I will not be intimidated by Chinese foreign interference." The former deputy prime minister emphasised the importance of protecting freedoms, drawing on her experience confronting authoritarian regimes.

This follows Freeland's resignation as finance minister , prompting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to announce his intent to step down as leader of both the government and the party, with a new leader to be chosen on 9 March

In reaction to media inquiries, the Chinese Embassy in Canada denied awareness of the alleged campaign, calling it "absurd" and asserting that the Liberal leadership race is a matter of domestic Canadian affairs, devoid of Chinese interest or involvement. *—PTI*

KANYE'S NEW ANTISEMITIC POST HAILS HITLER

WASHINGTON DC, 8 FEB

Rapper Kanye West went on another anti-semitic rant on X, posting the Nazi Swastika, saying "I'm a Nazi," and "Hail Hitler." West thanked Elon Musk for allowing him to post on the social media platform after he was banned on Instagram earlier, and teased Musk for "stealing his Nazi swag."

Kanye West had gone on a series of racist rants in 2022, leading to his twitter account being banned for eight months. He later apologized for his stance, and his account was reinstated in 2023. West's current racist spree also included a series of posts against gay people and fat women. He said he had "dominion over his wife," and that he had made "faggot cool again." *—Agencies*

GETS 25 YEARS

Indian-origin man jailed for killing NY teens

1NEW YORK, 8 FEB

A 36-year-old Indian-origin construction executive, Amandeep Singh, has been sentenced to a minimum of eight-and-a-third to 25 years in prison following a tragic drunk driving incident that claimed the lives of two teenagers in Long Island, New York. Singh drove at speeds of 150 km/h while under the influence of alcohol and cocaine on 3 May, 2023, resulting in a head-on collision that killed 14-year-olds Ethan Falkowitz and Drew Hassenbein.

Appearing emotionless in court, Singh listened as the victims' families expressed their grief. Drew's father, Mitch Hassenbein, described the torment of having to identify his son at the morgue, while Drew's grandfather condemned Singh as "the definition of evil." Singh admitted to his actions, calling them "stupid" and "selfish," and expressed remorse, stating, "If anyone should have died, it should have been me." On the fateful night, Singh was allegedly driving his pickup truck the wrong way at 95 mph in a 40 mph zone after consuming alcohol—his blood alcohol content measured at 0.15, nearly twice the legal limit.

He attempted to flee the scene but was apprehended by police hiding behind a dumpster. Initially pleading not guilty to charges including aggravated vehicular homicide, Singh later changed his plea to guilty.

The judge highlighted the lack of plea deals, ensuring accountability for Singh's reckless actions that devastated two families and the community. *—PTI*

The accused Amandeep Singh was allegedly driving the wrong way at 95 mph in a 40 mph zone after consuming alcohol *PHOTO: X*

Several PTI leaders arrested as party marks 'Black Day'

ISLAMABAD, 8 FEB

Several Pakistani leaders of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) were arrested as the party on Saturday held rallies to mark February 8 as the 'Black Day' against the alleged rigging of general elections last year.

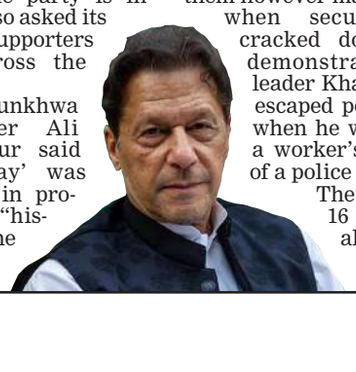
The PTI has planned its main rally in Swabi, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where the party is in power. It has also asked its workers and supporters to protest across the country.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur said the 'Black Day' was being marked in protest against the "historic theft of the people's mandate".

In Multan, PTI leaders Meher Bano Qureshi, Zahid Bahar Hashmi, and Dalir Meher were detained by police at Pull Chatta for violating Section 144. Over 10 PTI workers were also arrested for attempting to hold a rally in the area, Geo News reported.

Meanwhile, in Muzaffarabad, several PTI workers were detained for attempting to protest at Azadi Chowk. Some of them however managed to flee when security forces cracked down on the demonstrators. PTI leader Khawaja Farooq escaped police custody when he was placed in a worker's car instead of a police vehicle.

The official said 16 others were also arrested. *—PTI*



Oil India net profit drops 23% on lower oil prices

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

State-owned Oil India Ltd (OIL) reported a 23 per cent drop in its third-quarter net profit as the price of crude oil produced and sold fell. Net profit was Rs 1,221.80 crore in October-December 2024 - the third quarter of April 2024 to March 2025 fiscal (FY25) - compared with Rs 1,584.28 crore earning a year back, according to a company statement. The nation's second-largest state-owned oil and gas producer got USD 73.82 for every barrel of oil produced and sold as against USD 84.14 per barrel realisation in October-December 2023. The company's oil and gas production was almost unchanged at 0.868 million tonnes and 0.829 billion. —*PTI*

PHOTO:X

Tata launches vehicle scrapping facility in Guwahati

MUMBAI, 8 FEB

Tata Motors on Saturday announced the launch of its registered vehicle scrapping facility (RVSF) in Guwahati with a capacity to dismantle up to 15,000 end-of-life vehicles annually. Operated by Tata Motors' partner Axom Platinum Scrappers, the facility is equipped to scrap both passenger and commercial vehicles of all brands. With this, the home-grown auto major now has seven such facilities, including in Jaipur, Bhubaneswar, Surat, Chandigarh, the Delhi-NCR, and Pune, the company said. With a network of RVSFs across seven states, Tata Motors can now dismantle over 100,000 end-of-life vehicles annually. —*PTI*

Samsung workers resort to sit-in strike at TN plant

CHENNAI, 8 FEB

A section of employees at the factory of Korean home appliances manufacturer Samsung in Sriperumbudur near here have resorted to strike once again demanding reinstatement of three suspended employees who are part of the newly formed Samsung India Workers Union backed by CITU. The sit-in strike by the employees, about 500 of them (from the total 1,750), would continue if their immediate demands are not met with, union sources said. It may be recalled the employees were on strike for more than 30 days in 2024 pressing for various demands including wage revision and it was later called off after the Tamil Nadu government's intervention. Responding, Samsung India described the claims made by the union as 'false' and 'misleading', stating the company did not force any worker to join the committee or to leave the union. —*PTI*

Godrej Properties net debt down 49% in Q3

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

Godrej Properties Ltd has reduced its net debt by 49 per cent to Rs 3,848 crore during the latest quarter ended December on the back of strong internal cash flow and equity fund raising. Its net debt stood at Rs 7,572 crore as on 30 September, 2024, according to the company's latest investors presentation. Pirojsha Godrej, Executive Chairperson of Godrej Properties, said, "We raised Rs 6,000 crore during the third quarter through Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) route for growth capital". The company's net debt-to-equity ratio has come down to 0.23, he added. The company has emerged as the largest listed real estate developer during 2024 calendar year in terms of sales bookings, by selling properties worth Rs 28,800 crore. Its net profit stood at Rs 62.27 crore in the year-ago period. —*PTI*

'Fiscal, monetary steps to boost consumption'

FM says govt & RBI will work together to control inflation and support growth

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra and Directors during the 613th Meeting of Central Board of Directors (CBD) of the RBI, in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said fiscal and monetary measures announced recently will help boost consumption and promote private investment.

The Budget presented by the Finance Minister on 1 February proposed a slew of measures including significant income tax cuts for the middle class. Individuals earning up to Rs 12.75 lakh in a year will not have to pay any taxes, benefiting 1 crore taxpayers.

On the monetary side, the Reserve Bank on Friday slashed the policy rate by 25 basis points, the first rate cut in five years to support growth.

"After the Budget, the few inputs I've had from some business leaders is that the orders for fast-moving consumer goods for April-June are already getting booked, and the industry is clearly seeing signs of a possible recovery of consumption," she said at a media interaction after addressing the Board of the RBI in the customary post-budget meeting.

As a result, she said, many of them are looking at reviewing their capacity utilisation itself, which means you can safely see that the triggers for a consumption-driven cycle are clearly being felt by those who have to make investment decisions.

"So, I see this as a positive sign and with yesterday's decision of the RBI, together things can move in alignment and the required traction we made in this course," she said.

She also said both the government and the Reserve Bank of India will continue to work in a well-coordinated fashion to prop up growth and contain inflation.

Fiscal and monetary policy are working in tandem and there has been good coordination between the government and the RBI, she added. —*PTI*

Market forces decide Rupee value, RBI not worried: Guv

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

PHOTO:FREEPIK

- He further said that RBI took on board the current rupee-dollar rate while working out growth and inflation projections for the next financial year

Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Saturday said that the market forces decide the value of rupee with respect to the US dollar and the central bank is not worried about day-to-day movement of the currency value.

Addressing the media after the meeting of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with the Reserve Bank board, Malhotra said that the central bank focuses on the value of the rupee in the medium to long term.

On the impact of the depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar on price rise, the Governor said 5 per cent depreciation impacts domestic inflation to the extent of 30-35 bps.

He further said that RBI took on board the current rupee-dollar rate while working out growth and inflation projections for the next financial year.

Replying to a question, Finance Minister Sitharaman said the Union Cabinet has cleared the new income tax proposal and she hopes to have it introduced in the Lok Sabha in the coming Week.

Thereafter it will be sent to a parliamentary standing committee. —*PTI*

NCLT gets 7 days for BCCI-Byju's settlement

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

PHOTO:X

- NCLT had directed the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) to conduct an enquiry against Pankaj Srivastava, resolution professional of Think & Learn

Appellate tribunal NCLAT has directed NCLT to decide within a week over BCCI's plea for settlement and withdrawal of insolvency matter against ed-tech firm Byju's.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Rakesh Kumar Jain and Jatindranath Swain on Friday directed the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) while disposing of the plea filed by Riju Raveendran against the previous order of the tribunal to reinstate Glas Trust and Aditya Birla Finance into the Committee of Creditors (CoC) of Byju's.

"The NCLT is directed to decide the application, preferably in a week's time," the NCLAT said.

However, the Chennai bench of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) also made clear it has not made any observations on the facts.

Riju Raveendran, former promoter of Byju's and brother of Byju Raveendran has challenged the order of the Bengaluru bench of NCLT, which had on January 29 directed disciplinary proceeding against resolution professional of ed-tech firm and nixed his direction to exclude Glas Trust and Aditya Birla Finance from the edtech's Committee of Creditors.

NCLT had directed the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) to conduct an enquiry against Pankaj Srivastava, resolution professional of Think & Learn, which owns edtech firm Byju's.

The tribunal had also cancelled the reconstitution of the Committee of Creditors (COC) of Byju's, carried out by the Interim Resolution Professional on 31 August, 2024, in which Srivastava had excluded Glas Trust and Aditya Birla Finance. —*PTI*

3,600 WORKERS HIT

Meta to begin layoffs from 10 February

CALIFORNIA, 8 FEB

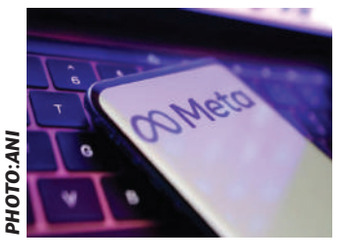


PHOTO:ANI

Meta Platforms, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, is set to commence global layoffs from 10 February, according to an internal memo cited by Reuters. While thousands of employees worldwide will be affected, local laws in France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands will protect workers in these countries from the job cuts.

The layoffs, which are expected to impact over 3,600 employees, will see notices being issued from 5 AM local time in most countries, including the United States. Employees across Africa, Europe, and Asia are also expected to receive termination notices between 11 and 18 February. Unlike previous job cuts, Meta will keep its offices open on 10 February.

Despite the layoffs, Meta is prioritising hiring for machine learning (ML) engineers and other critical engineering roles. A separate memo from Peng Fan, Meta's VP of Engineering for Monetisation, urged employees to assist in an accelerated recruitment drive from February 11 to March 13. The initiative aligns with Meta's strategic priorities for 2025.

The decision to downsize follows an earlier internal note from CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who announced a stricter performance-based management approach. He emphasised the need to raise performance standards and remove low-performing employees at a faster pace. —*Agencies*

MP EMERGING AS TEXTILE AND APPAREL HUB

BHOPAL, 8 FEB

Madhya Pradesh is rapidly emerging as a vibrant hub for the textile and garment industry, owing to its strategic local, rich agricultural base, robust infrastructure and investor-friendly policies.

The state has been leveraging its cotton production, along with favourable policies, to emerge as a key player in the textile industry.

Madhya Pradesh is the sixth largest cotton producer in India, producing about 18.01 lakh bales in 2023-2024, according to official data. 43 per cent of India's organic cotton and 24 per cent of global organic cotton production is from MP.

Mega Textile Park in Biyavra and Neemuch in the Malwa region offer infrastructure and incentives to attract investors in the textile sector, according to a state government paper on sectoral policy.

Upcoming PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Park in Dhar will help position the state as a leader in large-scale textile manufacturing. —*PTI*

Chief Minister Manik Saha urged investors to set up industries in the northeastern state *PHOTO: X*

Tripura conclave brings biz proposals worth ₹3,683 cr

AGARTALA, 8 FEB

The Tripura government on Saturday said that 87 Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) valued at Rs 3,683 crore were signed in the business conclave that concluded on 8 February.

Addressing the 'Destination Tripura: Business Conclave-2025' here, Chief Minister Manik Saha urged investors to set up industries in the northeastern state.

Asserting that the northeastern state has agar plantations covering over 2000 hectares in non-forest area, the chief minister said the state also produces over 1 lakh MT of raw rubber annually.

Saha also informed the industrial houses of the state's infrastructure for business, especially in Sabroom.

The Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is ready for operation at Sabroom in South Tripura where businessmen have shown interest in setting up ventures, he said. —*PTI*

Western Carriers bags ₹ 1,089 crore order from Vedanta

KOLKATA, 8 FEB

Kolkata-based Western Carriers (India) Ltd (WCIL), a multi-modal logistics firm, on Saturday said it has clinched a Rs 1,089 crore contract from mining giant Vedanta Limited.

One of the largest contracts in the sector, the four-year agreement, spanning until 2028, involves transporting aluminium products, pig iron, and export-import cargo from mining manor Vedanta's Jharsuguda (Odisha) facilities to domestic hubs and international ports, the company said.

The deal underscores WCIL's expertise in integrating rail, road, and warehousing solutions for bulk industrial shipments.

WCIL's infrastructure includes 50 plus branches, 16 warehouses, and 55 plus rail handling points across 23 states, enabling last-mile connectivity in remote areas.

The company reported Rs 1,297 crore in revenue for first nine months of FY25, with a net profit of Rs 68 crore. —*PTI*

Big corporates to lead way in adopting AI, data analytics: Report

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Big corporates are likely to lead the way in adopting new-age technology such as AI, data analytics, and cybersecurity solutions for improving their bottomline, a report said.

The demand for technologies such as AI, data analytics, and cybersecurity solutions is expected to grow significantly and larger businesses are likely to lead the way in adopting these tools, given their greater capacity for investment, as per the latest Business Technology Report published by CPA Australia.

The report highlighted numerous benefits that technology adoption brings to business, particularly in improving cybersecurity and the customer experience, and enhancing employee skills and satisfaction.

It also emphasised the importance of integrating technology to address emerging challenges, particularly in ESG.

"Businesses should focus on expanding their use of technology to monitor emissions, improve supply chain transparency, and engage with stakeholders effectively. This will not only enhance operational efficiency but also assist compliance with evolving regulatory requirements," it said.

To accelerate technology adoption, it said, businesses need access to affordable and user-friendly solutions tailored to their specific needs.

Governments should therefore consider policies that reduce financial barriers and provide incentives for adopting advanced technologies, it said. —*PTI*

ILLEGAL GAINS OF RS 53 CRORE

SEBI bans fininfluencer Asmita Patel, 5 others

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

Markets regulator SEBI has banned six entities, including Asmita Patel Global School and fin-influencer Asmita Patel, from the capital markets for alleged unregistered investment advisory services and directed to disgorge over Rs 53 crore collected as fees course participants for various courses.

SEBI through an interim order cum show cause notice passed on Thursday prohibited six entities, including Asmita Patel Global School of Trading Pvt Ltd (APGSOT), Asmita Jitesh Patel, Jitesh Jethalal Patel, King Traders, Gemini Enterprise and United Enterprises, from the capital market.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has also asked the six entities to explain why another Rs 104.63 crore should not be collected as fees for various programmes and should not be seized as well, according to a SEBI order.

The case pertains to individuals enrolling in trading courses provided by Asmita Patel Global School Of Trading. The SEBI order said that they were misled by exaggerated promises of profits and forced into paying high fees for minimal or ineffective trading education.

- The regulator noted that each entity has played specific roles at various stages which have prima facie, been found to violate SEBI's rules

YouTuber and financial influencer Asmita Patel portrays herself as the 'She Wolf of the stock market' and the 'options queen' and claimed to have mentored over one lakh students/investors/participants worldwide. As per the complainants, she (Asmita) has assets to the tune of Rs 140 crore using her proprietary system.

The regulator noted that each entity has played specific roles at various stages which have prima facie, been found to violate SEBI's rules.

Further, SEBI revealed that, prima facie APGSOT along with the Asmita and Jitesh devised a scheme wherein students/investors/participants were lured to trade in specific stocks and told to open a trading account with ABC Ltd.

According to SEBI, this was not a one-time arrangement but a regular practice followed by the Asmita Patel Global School of Trading to route funds through entities. —*PTI*

Asmita Patel

PHOTO: X

Diksha tied 14th; rookie Avani makes cut on pro debut

RABAT, 8 FEB

After an initial high, Diksha Dagar dropped two shots on the back nine and slipped to tied 14th after the second round of the Lalla Meryem Cup here. She has rounds of 71-73 and is 3-under after two rounds at the Par-73 course at Royal Golf Dar Es Salam. Also cutting her pro debut was the young Avani Prashanth, who added 74 to her first-round 71 and is now 1-under 145. She is Tied-24th, while the third Indian in the field, Tvesa Malik missed the cut with cards of 79-76. With Top-60 and ties cutting, 56 players made the cut which fell at 3-over.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Lahiri lying 11th in Liv Golf in Riyadh

RIYADH, 8 FEB

Anirban Lahiri fired a bogey-free round of 5-under 67 and moved up to tied-11th after the second day at the Liv Golf Riyadh being played under the lights. Lahiri shot 3-under 69 on the first day and is now 8-under but eight shots behind the leader Adrian Meronk (62-66) at 18-under. Cleeks GC's Adrian Meronk backed up his opening 10-under 62 with a 6-under 66 to grab a two-shot lead over Torque GC's Sebastián Muñoz. Ripper GC's Lucas Herbert is in solo third at 12 under after his 64 on Friday, the low round of the day. Tyrrell Hatton (66-67)and Jon Rahm (67-67) led Legion XIII to the lead in the Team standings and they are far ahead at 42-under with Torque led by Joaquin Niemann lying second. Legion XIII extended its team lead to a commanding 11 strokes after two rounds. —*PTI*

Lee penalised for rules violation at LIV Golf Riyadh

RIYADH, 8 FEB

Golf has the capability of throwing up some bizarre moments and, at LIV Golf Riyadh, that's exactly what happened to the experienced Lee Westwood. Sitting four shots off the lead, the Englishman came to the par 4 16th needing a steady finish to remain in contention but, after finding the water from his tee shot, what followed can only be described as confusing. Pulling his tee shot into the creek, Westwood and his caddie Mick Doran found a golf ball sitting in the water and, after Doran fished it out, Westwood played his third shot onto the green. Finding the putting surface, albeit 35 feet away, the 51-year-old went to mark his golf ball but, continuing the drama, Westwood realised it was a completely different make and model and, consequently, he had violated the Model Local Rule in place for the event. —*PTI*

Tiger Woods to play 1st PGA Tour event since July

SAN DIEGO, 8 FEB

Tiger Woods committed Friday to playing the Genesis Invitational at Torrey Pines, returning to one of his favorite venues for his first PGA Tour start since the British Open last July. Woods will be playing and walking 18 holes in competition for the first time since he had a microdiscectomy in September to alleviate pain down his legs, his sixth surgery on his lower back. He will compete just over a week after the loss of his mother, Kultida Woods, who died Tuesday at age 80.—*PTI*

Kujur shines with men's 100m gold in National Games

Arunachal Pradesh athletes clinch gold in female group

DEHRADUN, 8 FEB

Odisha's rising star Animesh Kujur clocked a Games record-equalling time of 10.28 seconds to win the men's 100m gold medal in a top-class field on the opening day of athletics competitions at the National Games here on Saturday.Out of the 10 gold medals on offer on the day, Maharashtra and Services picked up two each, while Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Tamil Nadu claimed one each.

The 21-year-old Kujur, who has a personal best time of 10.27 seconds, equaled the Games record of 10.28 seconds set by Amlan Borgohain of Assam while winning gold at the 2022 edition in Gujarat.

Kujur is the 100m silver medallist at both the Federation Cup and National Inter-State Championships in 2024.

Maharashtra's Pranav Gurav was the surprised silver winner with a time of 10.32 seconds, while Borgohain was third with 10.43 seconds. National record holder Manikanta Hoblidhar of Services finished fifth with a time of 10.46 seconds.

His national record set in 2023 stands at 10.23 seconds. One of the country's top 100m runners, Gurinderveer Singh, who won titles in the Federation Cup and National Inter-State Championships last year, failed to qualify for the final, finishing third in heat number 2 with a below-par time of 10.96 seconds. He has a personal best of 10.27 seconds.

The trio of Payal, Khushboo Kumari, and Nikhath PHOTO: X

Lawn bowls triumph breaks Bihar's gold medal drought

Bihar won a gold medal at the National Games for the first time in 25 years, clinching the women's triple lawn bowls gold in Uttarakhand on Saturday. The trio of Payal, Khushboo Kumari, and Nikhath Khatoon combined to help Bihar edge past the team from West Bengal by a slender 15-14 margin in the gold medal match. Earlier in the day, they had defeated Delhi 19-18 in the semi-finals to make their way into the gold medal match.

"We played as one unit with a single goal and that propelled us to the gold medal," Radha Bangsia, Lumter Uli, and Achum Sangha from Arunachal Pradesh won a gold medal in the female group Poomsae event at the 38th National Games in Uttarakhand. Their excellent performance and teamwork in Taekwondo Poomsae earned them national recognition. Pema Khandu, Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh praised their hard work, dedication, and skill. He also thanked their coaches and supporters for their role in this success.

Congratulating the trio, CM Khandu extended his best wishes for their future endeavors in a post on social media and said, "So proud of Radha Bangsia, Lumter Uli, and Achum Sangha, who have brought glory to Arunachal Pradesh by winning #GoldMedal in the female group Poomsae event at 38th #NationalGames being held in Uttarakhand." —*PTI*

Animesh Kujur (Odisha) blazes to gold in the men's 100m PHOTO: X

2ND ODI: KOHLI IS FIT

India eye series win over England

CUTTACK, 8 FEB

Star batter Virat Kohli has recovered from a sore right knee and is fit to play the second ODI against England here on Sunday, confirmed batting coach Sitanshu Kotak. "Virat Kohli is fit to play. He has come for practice and is good to go," Kotak told media persons on the eve of the second game here. However,r he didn't divulge who among opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and last match's half-centurion Shreyas Iyer would be dropped from the playing eleven. "It is captain (Rohit Sharma) and coach's (Gautam Gambhir) call. I can't answer this," Kotak replied. The barren run of skipper Rohit Sharma and the selection conundrum that Virat Kohli's possible return poses are the towering obstacles in India's quest for a series win against England in the second ODI here on Sunday.

India had taken a 1-0 lead after their four-wicket win at Nagpur, but Kohli, who was getting rested owing to a "sore right knee," had raised concerns about his fitness ahead of the Champions Trophy later this month. However, vice-captain Shubman Gill had indicated that Kohli could be back for the second match, which will be played at a venue where the latter made a match-winning 85 against the West Indies in 2019.

Kohli had also traveled to Cuttack with his teammates and looked relaxed.

Who will Kohli replace?

Shreyas Iyer, who came in for Kohli at the last minute by his admission, made a rollicking 36-ball 59 that has made dropping him an almost unthinkable act.If the past norms are followed, then Kohli will walk in for Shreyas, but it is more likely that Yashasvi Jaiswal could be the one who will have to make for the batting icon.

It means that Gill might rejoin Rohit at the top, and Jaiswal did not have a blazing match either at Nagpur. The match starts at 1:30 pm IST —PTI

Mulani and Shaw put Mumbai in a position of strength

KOLKATA, 8 FEB

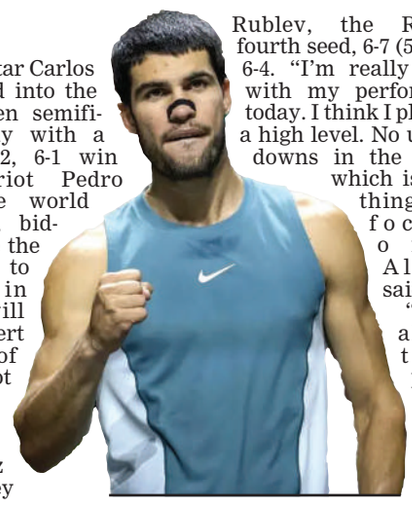
Mumbai's eternal crisis men Shams Mulani and Tanush Kotian once again stood tall amid ruins with a 165-run stand for the eighth wicket as the defending champion staged an impressive fightback to reach 278 for 8 against Haryana in the opening day of their Ranji Trophy quarter-final.

Having opted to bat, Mumbai batting unit comprising former Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane (31), T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav (9), batting all-rounder Shivam Dube (28) were down in the dumps at 113 for 7, largely due to some incisive bowling by the military medium trundlers from Haryana led by workhorse Anshul Kamboj (3/58 in 18 overs).But once the moisture dried up, Eden strip became a batting paradise as usual with Mulani (91, 178 balls) and last year's 'Player of the Tournament' Kotian (85 batting, 154 balls) making full use of the loose deliveries. —*PTI*

ROTTERDAM OPEN 2025

Alcaraz races into semifinals

PARIS, 8 FEB



Spanish superstar Carlos Alcaraz hurtled into the Rotterdam Open semifinals on Friday with a comfortable 6-2, 6-1 win over compatriot Pedro Martinez. The world number three, bidding to become the first Spaniard to triumph in Rotterdam, will next face Hubert Hurkacz of Poland for a spot in Sunday's final.

Eighth-seeded Hurkacz defeated Andrey Rublev, the Russian fourth seed, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-4. "I'm really happy with my performance today. I think I played at a high level. No ups and downs in the match, which is something I'm focused on," Alcaraz said.

"It is always tough playing Pedro, so I knew I had to be focused from the first ball to the last," he added.

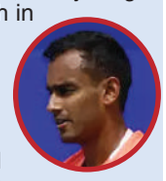
It was the first time the two Spanish players had met on the professional tour and Alcaraz showed the gulf in class between himself and Martinez, ranked 41 places below him.

He wasted no time in stamping his authority on the match, breaking the Martinez serve in the first game. A second break followed quickly. Alcaraz wrapped up the first set with an ace. The pattern repeated itself at the start of the second set. Martinez was the architect of his downfall, losing his first service game with a double fault and a wild forehand. —*PTI*

Mukund and Karan get wild cards for Delhi Open ATP

NEW DELHI, 8 FEB

The organizer of the Delhi Open an ATP Challenger event on Saturday announced wild card entries for three Davis Cuppers Sasikumar Mukund, Ramkumar Ramanathan, and young Karan Singh in the men's singles main draw. Youngster Chirag Duhan, and Aryan Shah, who were part of the Davis Cup training camp have been given wild cards for the qualifying event, along with Aditya Govila, and Sidharth Rawat. Former World No. 31 Lloyd Harris and 2019 junior Wimbledon champion Shintaro Mochizuki will be among the top 8 seeds at the ATP Challenger 75 event, returning for its fifth edition at the DLTA Complex from February 10-16. South African Harris, with his burgeoning trophy cabinet and list of notable scalps, including Rafael Nadal.



B'luru hopes to rediscover form against Jamshedpur

BENGALURU, 8 FEB

A struggling Bengaluru FC will have their task cut out as they look to snap a six-match winless streak in the Indian Super League (ISL) when they host Jamshedpur FC here on Sunday.

The Blues are currently undergoing a difficult patch of form. They have been winless in their last six games, drawing once and losing five times -- including three defeats on the bounce entering Sunday's game.

Jamshedpur FC, on the other hand, have broken their six-game winless streak against Bengaluru FC with a 2-1 victory in the reverse fixture and will now aim to complete a league double over the Blues for the second time (previously in 2020-21).

However, they have struggled to find their feet at the Kanteerava stadium, being unable to emerge victorious in their previous four clashes there. In the standings, Jamshedpur FC are placed third with 34 points from 18 matches on the back of 11 victories and a solitary draw. They are involved in a close battle with FC Goa for the second place.

The Blues are currently undergoing a difficult patch of form PHOTO: X

The Red Miners have a chance to leapfrog FC Goa (34) with a win here and they will aim for nothing less to sustain pressure and keep challenging for the top two, which qualifies a team directly for the semi-final. —*PTI*

AUSTRALIA ON BRINK OF SL TEST SERIES SWEEP

PARIS, 8 FEB

Australia is two wickets away from ending Sri Lanka's second innings in the second Test On Saturday, with the hosts reeling at 211-8 at stumps on day three in Galle.

Earlier, Alex Carey turned entertainer-in-chief with a swashbuckling 156 his career-best knock, peppered with 15 boundaries and two towering sixes. With Sri Lanka leading by only 54 runs, Steve Smith's side will be eager to mop up the tail early Sunday and seal a 2-0 sweep. Angelo Mathews

was the linchpin of Sri Lanka's innings, holding things together as wickets tumbled at the other end. But just 15 minutes before the close of play, he swept Nathan Lyon straight to square leg, where Beau Webster pocketed a sharp the 37-year-old warhorse had dug deep for a fighting half-century, but Sri Lanka needed a marathon knock, not his well-compiled 76.

Mathews finds himself in the crosshairs, with just one fifty in his last eight innings.Ahead of this Test, the selectors had made it clear -- unless he started churning out big runs, his spot in the next cycle of the World Test Championship was not fixed. Sri Lanka 257 & 211 for 8 (Mathews 76, Mendis 48*, Kuhnemann 4-52, Lyon 3-80) lead Australia 414 (Carey 156, Smith 131, Jayasuriya 5-151) by 54 runs. —*PTI*

Kane brace as Bayern beat Bremen 3-0

MUNICH, 8 FEB

Two second-half penalties from Harry Kane and a tap-in from substitute Leroy Sané gave Bayern Munich a 3-0 win over Werder Bremen on Friday and a nine-point lead in the Bundesliga.

Bayern had the better of the early play but had to wait until the 61st minute to break the deadlock. Kane scored his 20th league goal from the penalty spot after Anthony Jung was judged to have handled inside the box.

Leroy Sané made it 2-0 just seconds after replacing Kingsley Coman in the 81st when he got away from his marker and converted Konrad Laimer's cross at the back post.

Kane iced the match with his second penalty in the ninth minute of added time.

Bremen goalkeeper Michael Zetterer kept the score down; his best save was a one-handed stop from a Dayot Upamecano header in the second half.

The victory was Bayern's 10th in 11 home fixtures this season and its eighth win in nine games in all competitions since the start of 2025. Bremen was in eighth place. —*PTI*

- Two second-half penalties from Harry Kane and a tap-in from substitute Leroy Sané gave Bayern Munich a 3-0 win over Werder Bremen on Friday and a nine-point lead in the Bundesliga.

LATE FA CUP LOSS

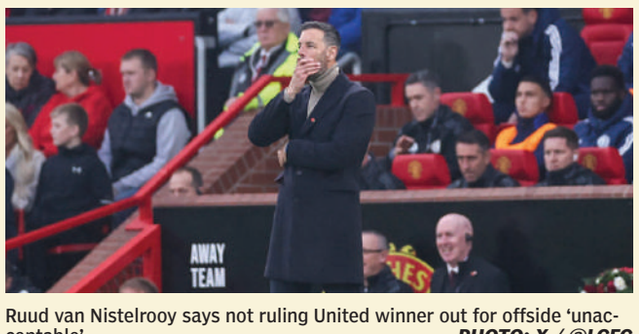
Van Nistelrooy fumes at 'offside goal'

MANCHESTER, 8 FEB

Leicester coach Ruud van Nistelrooy was left frustrated after his team's controversial 2-1 loss to Manchester United in the FA Cup last 16 on Friday. United's Harry Maguire netted a dramatic injury-time winner, despite strong claims that he was in an offside position.

Without VAR in the FA Cup, the goal stood, sending United through to the next round and marking their third home win over Leicester this season.

"This (loss) wasn't necessary," Van Nistelrooy told broadcasters. "This was half



Ruud van Nistelrooy says not ruling United winner out for offside 'unacceptable' PHOTO: X / @LCFC

/ @LCFC a meter (offside). Then extra time, stay in the game, you never know what happens. We deserved to go into extra time and maybe penalties. Decisions like these at our level are hard to swallow."

Leicester had taken the lead four minutes before halftime through Bobby De Cordova-Reid.

Manuel Ugarte was dispossessed near the touchline, allowing Bilai El Khannouss to send in a low cross that Wilfred Ndidi struck goalbound, deflecting in off De Cordova-Reid. Leicester went into the break with a deserved 1-0 advantage.—*PTI*

- Leicester coach Ruud van Nistelrooy was left frustrated after his team's controversial 2-1 loss to Manchester United in the FA Cup last 16

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia scores his first PSG goal

PARIS, 8 FEB

New signing Khvicha Kvaratskhelia scored his first goal for Paris Saint-Germain when the unbeaten Ligue 1 leader routed third-placed Monaco 4-1 to go 13 points clear on Friday.

The Georgia winger joined from Napoli for a reported 70 million euros ($72 million) and with a big reputation for skill and clinical finishing. He showed a bit of both in the 54th minute, controlling a quick pass with his right foot, cutting cleverly inside Christian Mawissa, and scooping the ball off balance over goalkeeper Radoslaw Majecki.

That made it 2-1 and, three minutes later, Ousmane Dembélé added the third goal after combining well with Désiré Doué. He tapped in from close range in the last minute following a counterattack to extend his league-leading tally to 16 goals. PSG led in the sixth minute when Vitinha curled a free kick into the bottom right corner. But he was helped by a major positional error from Majecki, who left a huge gap. PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma was easily beaten at the near post when captain Zakaria ran onto a smart pass from Soungoutou Magassa. —*PTI*